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Education

REMARKS

OF

FRANCIS H. UNDERWOOD,

BEFORE THE

SCHOOL COMMITTEE,

UPON THE

HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION OF BOYS.

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SEPTEMBER 21, 1869.

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REMARKS.

Since the time, one year ago, when the original order was offered, asking for improvements in our high school instruction, the investigations of the Committee have covered such an extensive range of thought and experience, and have touched such a variety of related topics, that it will be impossible to present a fair statement of the questions to be decided in a very brief compass. Believing that the importance of the subject is felt by all the members of the Board, I shall make no apology for consuming a larger portion of time than I have hitherto ventured to do, promising however to touch only upon necessary points, and to treat those with becoming brevity. I believe it to be generally admitted that there was a necessity for the movement which we are to consider. It is *conceded* that the course of study in the English High School is deficient in many respects, being neither a suitable preparation for literary culture, nor varied enough to serve as a foundation for technical studies, nor complete enough for the formation of a strong and symmetrical character of mind.

The statements of the late venerable head-master, the opinions of his assistants, and the concurrent observation of all scholarly men leave no doubt upon this point.

As to the Latin School, though it has naturally found zealous champions among those who are proud of an antiquity that reaches back to the infancy of the Colony of the Bay, still, few will be found to assert that its mode of instruction is perfect, and fewer still will maintain, in view of all the results, that opening its doors to untaught infants of ten years is a wise and humane provision.

Lastly, as the State should lead the way in matters of education, and not allow that its vast resources, and its accumulated experience are insufficient to compete with private enterprise, we

cannot be in doubt that the small number of scholars seeking for higher education in the public schools furnishes the strongest evidence of the degree of estimation in which they are held, and renders our duty clear and imperative.

The report of the Committee which I had the honor to present has been printed, and I hope its facts and conclusions are familiar. Its doctrines are still approved by my matured judgment, and I have read no treatise or memoir from any conspicuous friend of education that has not contributed some friendly illustration to its reasoning. That report is not now before the Board for action, having been referred back to the Committee, and in what shape it will come it is, of course, impossible to say; but I presume that its spirit will remain unchanged, however the Committee may alter the details of the plan.

The Board having appointed this evening for the consideration of the subject, and as it is certain that several sessions will be occupied in the discussion, I see no reason why it should not begin; and in the conflict of opinions some ideas may be brought out that will aid the Special Committee in giving a definite and practical form to the large hopes and high conceptions they have begun to entertain. Having had some familiarity with the subject, I shall endeavor to lay out the ground for discussion, using a little more latitude than would be allowed in the formality of a report.

It may be proper briefly to allude to some objections that have been publicly made against the proposed reform. I shall barely allude to them, trusting to the general course of the argument to answer them more fully.

You will remember that at the last exhibition of the Latin School, Mr. Wendell Phillips, with questionable taste, as it seems to me, chose to declaim against the anticipated report of the Committee. If this was done with the sanction of the Latin School Committee, or solely by the procurement of the head-master, then the persons responsible were guilty of a gross breach of courtesy to the special Committee. Mr. Phillips is presumably unacquainted with the current discussion upon modes of instruction, as indeed his address fully shows; but his rhetoric, as we all know, is dazzling, and his ornate sentences may impress an uninstructed public more than the solid experience of the great Dr. Arnold himself.

It will be remembered that I had called attention to the small number that complete the Latin School course. One-fifth of the whole was stated to be the proportion; two-ninths would be more exact. In a history of academies and high schools published by Hon. H. Barnard at the National Bureau of Education, the annual average number of graduates of the Latin School is stated to be 16.8. Previous to Mr. Gardner's time it was 12.5. These figures, compared with the whole number belonging to an average class, bear out my assertion. But of this last year's class it seems that 25 were admitted into colleges from the school; whereupon Mr. Phillips exclaims against the statement as untrue, and says (if I remember rightly) that this year 85 per cent. is the true proportion.

It seems incredible that he could have misunderstood what was intended, namely, to give the percentage of graduates to the whole number that had belonged to the class from the beginning. It could hardly have escaped the attention of a fair-minded observer, that the real point of animadversion was in the significent dropping off of pupils from year to year, and not in comparing the number of those received in colleges with the number of the class at graduation. Upon this fallacious ground Mr. Phillips would convict me of stating an incorrect "sum." I do not remember but one parallel to this case of "ciphering."

A distinguished advocate, in defending a man indicted for selling adulterated milk, after learning from Dr. White, the chemist, who was a witness for the government, that in pure milk there was about 86 per cent. of water, and having heard the learned Doctor's opinion that in the specimen under consideration it appeared that 30 per cent. of water had been intentionally added, the advocate endeavored to show to the jury—how seriously I cannot say—that this conclusion was impossible; because, he argued, as 30 added to 86 makes more than 100, so, under this state of facts, the compound should be all water,—and more, too!

The other conservative demonstration was by the "Daily Advertiser." *Quieta non movere!* Let well enough alone! Stand by the old paths! Remove not the ancient landmarks! And all the other mouldy maxims which have been used to hinder all reforms in all ages, and in all tongues. The article was quite remarkable in that journal for its want of sympathy

with popular education, its well-to-do air of superior wisdom, and its faintly acid wit. The chief point made, (and the author was so much pleased with his simile that he repeated it in a subsequent article,) was in ridicule of the proposal to combine classical with other useful learning in a preparatory school. He likened this to the ill-assorted variety of a country store, in which codfish and ribbons, cutlery and crockery jostle and incommode each other. I shall not at this moment enter into the discussion of this topic, as I propose presently to set up an authority to which even the versatile writer of the "Advertiser" must bow. But I wish to observe that education is not to be confined to the cultivation of one set of faculties, nor to the accumulation of one class of facts; and that if we cannot escape the narrowing influences of exclusively special teaching, it is better to mingle elements of training apparently incongruous, even if it should displease the fastidious "Advertiser," if thereby we may attain a more varied experience and a more robust intellectual life.

The odd lot of the country store *is* amusing to think of, and if the laws of mental development are to be established by *persiflage*, then perhaps the prince of triflers, Voltaire, was not in the wrong in his philosophic mode of settling religious truth.

The simile is very tempting; the bauble glitters in one way as held by the critic's dainty fingers. Suppose its ray were turned upon church services. I have a certain fondness for unity in public worship. I like most devoutly a plain choral, and again I am thrilled by the music of the mass. But the intellectual simplicity of the one is at home in the unpretentious meeting-house; the gorgeous ceremonial of the other befits the sculptured and dim-windowed cathedral. And when I want to hear Luther's hymns, I know where they are sung. If I long for antiphonal chants from full-voiced choir and pealing organ, with responses from robed ecclesiastics, I go to Rome. I do not relish mongrel vespers.

One other criticism published in the "Advertiser" a year ago will show of how little value is the opinion of merely literary men upon a practical matter like instruction. The writer condemned vigorously a series of charts by Leigh, designed to facilitate the instruction of primary children, declared them

worse than valueless, since children after using them would have to *un*learn Leigh before learning English.

The sentence was happy as an epigram. It had the misfortune, however, like many smart sayings, of being untrue. Now those charts are used with eminent success in the training school and in several primaries, and are considered by all who have seen the results of using them, to mark an epoch in primary instruction. And as to the difficulty of *un*learning Leigh, I have seen a class of children, fresh from the charts, read fluently from ordinary type at the first trial, and with an unequalled perfection of pronunciation. That their use will become general in time, there can be no doubt.

This simply shows the folly of giving opinions upon subjects one has not investigated. And I trust in considering the opinions of gentlemen upon these educational matters, the members of the Board will weigh well the character of mind, the pursuits and experience of each witness. One calm sentence from a man of acute observation and practical experience, like Matthew Arnold or Daniel B. Hagar, is worth all the sentiment of the merely literary man, all the ridicule of the *persifleur*, and all the smug conceit and unreasoning dogmatism of the conservative, no matter what honorable or reverend prefix his name may wear.

Our scholars begin at an average age of less than six years, those of the poorer classes almost always at five. Under proper instruction the six rooms into which the primary school is divided will be passed in two and a half years by the pupil of average intelligence. The duller ones may be longer; but as promotion is the right of the individual, and is not to be delayed to the injury of one for the benefit of another, we can look for the admission of an average pupil into the grammar school at about eight years of age. Children of more active faculties will easily go through the primary course in two years, and can therefore afford to begin later.

We come now to disputed ground. But I have no difficulty in asserting that the present course in the grammar schools ought to be completed in about four years, five at the longest—completed, I mean, for such as are going on to receive secondary instruction; those whose schooling is to end with this stage, can, of course, remain in the grammar school longer with ad-

vantage, especially in the upper rooms. We can then count upon pupils for secondary education at twelve or thirteen years, having completed the grammar school course. If it be said that this is not now the case, I reply that it ought to be and will be, and without undue effort or strain upon tender minds. Much remains to be done in our grammar schools to give interest and vitality to teaching, and especially to avoid, to put an end to those senseless repetitions of dry formulas by which year after year children's memories are wearied while their reason and taste are neglected. If it be asked why we do not seek to begin at the foundation, I reply, that all experience shows that in these as in other intellectual fields, the light is from above. The influence that is to raise, to improve, to adorn, comes from the university to the college, from the college to the academy, and so downwards. It is by seeing what the college demands that we fix the course of preparation. The needs of the high school will mainly govern the teaching that is to conduct to it.

When the few and simple studies of the present grammar school course are philosophically taught, when scholars are aided upwards in promotion, and not detained on the way by a selfish teacher, to give brilliancy to a class, then the desired progress will be accomplished, and we can put our secondary schools on the right level.

In building my house, Mr. President, I must look at the prospective as well as the present grade of the street. I would not have the threshold in the air, nor sunk to the proper level of the cellar. Let us take an intelligent survey of the ground, ascertain what is practicable, and then adjust our measures in correspondence.

No educational scheme that requires a comparative system of ages can be maintained without giving some latitude. Let us make a judicious estimate of probabilities in forming a plan, and in practice we can approach the ideal standard by such degrees as shall be found necessary.

I am led to make these remarks because some minds are so formed that they accept a plan in its literal terms, and do not reflect that approximation is all that can be hoped for in human affairs. One gentleman upon the Special Committee insisted that as the average age of grammar school graduates was fif-

teen, it would be impossible to adjust this stubborn fact with the Committee's plan. It was to no purpose that he was assured that that average age could and would be reduced, and that pending the desired, the inevitable improvement in the lower schools, we could use a sliding scale.

We will then suppose that our boys are ready to commence secondary education at twelve, or at most, at thirteen years. Those who are not then ready will either be found to have no special vocation for higher training, or will be so few in number that our rule should not be altered for their benefit. What is the next, the most beneficial, the most natural, the most prudent step? In a few remarkable cases, like the Admirable Crichton, Montaigne or Everett, the early development of ability and taste will be so marked as to demand the highest classical training. In most boys it is not so; and many a parent and teacher doubts whether the bright lad of twelve is to sell dry goods, like Abbott Lawrence, design spires, like Upjohn, argue legal questions, like Curtis, write history, like Motley, or wield the powers of mechanics, like Ruggles, or Blanchard, or Wilmarth. And in any event I claim that in view of the uncertainty of human affairs it is not best for the future scholar, artificer, or lawyer that he should begin with the narrow and exclusive training of the Latin school. I shall not go over the arguments adduced in our former report, as I have never seen any attempt to answer them. I merely repeat that studies of general utility are best for at least two years, to fourteen or fifteen. And these two years I would have spent in such a school as the English High School ought to be.

This brings us to the question of introducing Latin into the English High School course.

As I have already said, Mr. Sherwin gave his decided testimony in favor of the study of Latin; his associates concur in the opinion. Rev. Dr. Hill thinks it indispensable. So do Mr. Emerson, Mr. Hagar, Mr. Boyden, and every teacher of whom the question was asked. Profs. Atkinson and Runkle apparently regretted its exclusion from the course of the Institute of Technology, and both thought it would be an admirable addition to the high school course, especially for such pupils as intended to pursue technical studies.

I shall have occasion frequently to refer to a volume of Parliamentary Reports, for which I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Philbrick. The first part is a report upon the burgh schools of Scotland, a class of schools corresponding to our high schools, including also the upper class of our grammar schools. This was made by Mr. Fearon, one of the Royal Commissioners in 1868. The other portion is a report upon schools of a corresponding rank in France, Italy, Germany and Switzerland, after a tour of seven months, by another Commissioner, Mr. Matthew Arnold, son of the famous Dr. Arnold of Rugby. No one can read these reports without being struck by the admirable qualities of mind they reveal, by the exact method visible in investigation, and the wide experience of which they are the result. From the first, these gentlemen command the reader's entire confidence, as being just and free from that prejudice which makes almost every Englishman a walking island.

Dr. Jäger, the director of a school in the city of Cologne, in which there was both a classical and a general department, the latter called a *realschule*, told Mr. Arnold that the boys in the corresponding forms of the classical school beat the *realschule* boys in matters which both do alike, such as history, geography and the mother tongue, so much does the study of the classics strengthen the boys' minds. This, he adds, is what the chief school authorities everywhere in France and Germany testify. Even in Switzerland, he says, there is talk of introducing Latin into the *realschule* course; so impossible is it to follow absolutely the commercial theory of education without finding inconvenience from it. With these authorities I leave the question, making only the obvious suggestion that the Latin language should be studied in the most attractive way during these two years of trial, and should not occupy more than one-fourth of the boy's time. Then, if he is to go to college he will have a basis of sound elementary instruction as well as familiarity with paradigms; if he is to have a business training, the Latin he has learned will be as useful as any single element of his knowledge.

Now let me ask is there anything thus far that requires two institutions? Cannot the Latin be taught to the whole in one department? and so of the other studies?

Our pupils have now come to fourteen or fifteen years. Now those who are to go to college will commence a separate course. With ease and certainty this will be accomplished in four years, in some instances in three. And, by the testimony of all, a boy who has followed this course will be more fully and solidly trained in every respect than he would be under any exclusively classical tuition, especially if sent, a ten-years-old baby, to be suckled upon Andrews and Stoddard. At eighteen or nineteen he will be ready to enter college. Young enough, almost too young, for the ever-increasing burden with which Harvard tries the intellectual strength of her sons.

This is a sketch of a regular course of preparation for college, but it should not be the only course open. Until the proposed changes are fully settled, pupils might be admitted to commence classical training, after passing a suitable examination, at twelve years, and then go through a six years course. This would be more feasible in some circumstances, and the two years added to the minimum age would give the boys an increased toughness of fibre, which is greatly needed.

If it is settled in the opinion of members that the present separation between the two high schools should continue, it may well be determined that the full course hereafter for the Latin School shall be six years from a minimum age of twelve; and that for pupils who have spent two years in the English High School (as before suggested,) the course is to oe four years or less. By these changes many of the objections to the Latin School would be obviated.

Before leaving this branch of the subject I desire to call renewed attention to the mode of teaching Latin, as commented upon in the report I had the honor to submit to the Board. The subject has more importance than appears on the surface; for if knowledge and command of a language are compatible with facility of acquisition, it is not only a positive gain in itself, but a much greater good in the increased time and power saved for other equally useful studies. In the appendix of the report referred to are several spirited extracts from Prof. D'Arcy Thompson's works, censuring the prevailing mode of teaching Latin in England, a censure that would fall still heavier here. Now our learned head-master of the Latin School was incredulous as to the worth of Prof. Thompson's

opinions. The "Advertiser" also wondered what they were printed for; but I notice that Mr. Wm. Everett, in his printed essay, has taken great pains to refute them, although not by name. In short, Mr. Gardner would, as far as possible, follow English models, and Mr. Everett approves as far as the resemblance is carried out.

What is to be thought then of the value of this judgment when we find that both Mr. Fearon and Mr. Arnold, in the volume I have mentioned, expressly admit that the English secondary schools are the worst in civilized Europe? After patiently reading their careful reports, Prof. Thompson, who appeared to be rather extravagant in tone, is seen to be fully vindicated, and the eulogists and imitators of England are left in a very unenviable position. I shall content myself with a very brief summary of their opinions—as the time would fail to make many citations. I have preserved the references to the original, and am prepared to verify the perfect fairness of the abstract.

In the English Commissioners' report, primary education extends from the age of six to eleven or twelve. Secondary education, from eleven or twelve to eighteen or nineteen. Superior education belongs to the college and university.

Our grammar schools are not *secondary*, except that the master's class may be considered as belonging to that division. A grammar school anciently signified a classical school; we appropriate it to the latter portion of primary education.

No secondary education is possible for poor people in England; first, on account of the expense, and next, on account of the barrier made by social rank. (p. 10.)

In Scotland it is *better* for the poor, but still difficult. In the Scotch burgh schools the students have optional courses of study (as proposed here,) which Mr. Fearon thinks is better than the English plan. (p. 16.)

Results of the English system are complete stagnation; only a few brilliant boys are well educated. Large funds are squandered in one place without scholars, while facilities are utterly wanting in other populous districts. (p. 26.)

The mode of teaching in Scotland is far superior: as taught, the dead languages, says Mr. Fearon, *do not seem so dead.* (p. 48.)

The continental mode of pronunciation of Latin prevails in Scotland. Gentlemen are aware that our schools are following

the absurd example of England in this matter, by which we are shut out from fellowship in classics with all the educated world.

As to the success of the Scotch burgh schools, Mr. Fearon wisely observes that education to be good, should be popular. As an instance he cites the burgh school of the town of Ayr, which in a population of about 20,000, has 390 pupils. I have elsewhere commented upon the small proportion of secondary pupils in Boston.

As to the English universities themselves, with whose venerated antiquity many people would awe us into unquestioning silence,—the universities, I say, are characterized by an Italian gentleman, with the approval of Mr. Arnold, as *hauts lycées*, and as in every way inferior to their continental rivals.

Superior education in France is under the control of the University, which has 18 academic centres.

Secondary education is carried on in *lycées* and communal or district colleges. France has 74 *lycées* supported mainly by the state, and 247 communal colleges supported by the communes. The *lycée* has 8 classes, and covers both primary and secondary instruction for 8 years. Its graduates are generally 17 years old. The programme includes both classical and general studies, including music and drawing.

The communal college has the same design, the same course of study as the *lycée*.

Mr. Arnold declares that the Latin grammars in use in France, which follow old models, are far better than prolix modern grammars. (p. 504.) Elsewhere he says that a Latin grammar for a beginner need not exceed 30 pages. Simple elements, in order to commence reading first; the full rationale to come later.

He reprobates the English custom of flogging as punishment, (followed, I believe, in both our high schools, and at times with some vigor) declares that on the Continent it has almost ceased, and that the modern spirit has doomed it. (p. 502.)

He admits the great superiority of the French schools in teaching mathematics and the natural sciences. (p. 506.)

He mentions approvingly the attempts made in France to combine classical learning with instruction in the arts and sciences in parallel classes in the same secondary school. (p. 509.)

The principle of *bifurcation* or choice of a line of studies, is allowed. In cases where this plan was not a success, Mr.

Arnold thinks it was because the master was himself too ultra classical or the reverse, to do justice to both departments.

It is the French theory that the state's duty is to establish models, and so improve private institutions. The sons of the rich, the titled, all the leading boys, are in the public schools. The private schools are for invalids, for dull boys, and those who from any reason shrink from competition with the best.

Schools for secondary education in Prussia are gymnasiums and *realschulen.*

Nine years is the full course in both of these classes of schools, (10 to 19.) The gymnasium is for classical studies mainly. The *realschulen* of the first class have Latin in their course; in those of the second class Latin is an optional study.

The strong hostility to classical studies which led to the foundation of *realschulen,* seems to be passing away, and to many of the most famous gymnasiums *realschulen* classes are now appended.

The conflict between the two theories of education, Mr. Arnold thinks, will end by compromise, adopting the best features of both courses of instruction.

Private schools in Prussia, likewise, are only preparatory; they cannot and do not compete with the *realschulen.* (p. 552.) The same is true in Switzerland. (p. 618.)

We enjoy the distinction of paying for a large and costly high school system, and then sending the greater part of our sons to private schools at our private charge.

Mr. Arnold confirms the statements of Prof. Thompson as to the superior facility in the use of Latin in all continental schools, partly because it is treated as a *literature* to be widely read, instead of a curious bit of antiquity, to be minutely, microscopicly studied. Mr. James Stuart Mill, the eminent philosopher, favors the same view, viz., that it is better to know the language in the free, broad way. (p. 598.)

I would observe in passing, Mr. President, that nothing so surely marks the decay of a study, and nothing is so certain to accelerate it, as giving all attention to details when the life and soul are wanting. With due respect to more learned men, I think Cambridge is not without fault here. We study Latin literature, as Prof. Bowen says, apparently to get a knowledge of the Latin grammar, instead of using the grammar as an in-

troduction to a noble literature. We break a sentence of Plautus on the wheel to show the articulation of its members. If a literature could be likened to a beautiful tapestry, our modern teacher, instead of surveying the exquisite design as a whole, crouches on one corner with his glass. If you ask him "Do you see, Mr. Grammar-pounder, this pattern? that waving vine, those almost tremulous leaves, that luscious fruit, those dancing fauns?" "No, indeed," he replies, rising up, blinking and red, "but here is such curious piece of weaving; I have counted so many hundred stitches in one square inch. And *such* strange fibres of wool are twisted in these threads! Why, I think, though not quite sure, that I detected some fibres from the famous flat-tailed sheep of Thibet."

To return to our author.

Mr. Arnold says that the tendency of thought all over Europe is against *exclusively* classical training. (p. 512.) In Italy, even, he says, the tendency is toward natural science and away from the classics.

The Prussian schools, says Mr. A., are the best in Europe. This, he thinks, has been owing to many influences, but more than any to the wise, firm and far-seeing supervision of the Minister of Education, the great Wilhelm von Humboldt, brother, and not inferior to, the more famous Alexander. With what spirit he administered his great office may be judged from this pregnant sentence. "*The thing is* NOT *to let the schools and universities go on in a drowsy and impotent routine; the thing is to raise the culture of the nation ever higher and higher by their means.*"

The Prussian schools, though under government supervision, are not free to pupils; in fact they are not anywhere in Europe. The pupils in Germany pay in tuition fees about nine-twentieths of the total cost of education.

He was struck with the facilities for gymnastic exercises, and for musical instruction in Germany, the want of which he deplored in England.

What would he say of *our* high schools in this respect? Without wicket, cricket, base ball, play-ground, or amusement of any sort? With absolute ignorance of music? With the whole artistic nature as bare and dead during the secondary course as last year's girdled tree?

As a further indication of the low state of English culture, Mr. Arnold says that the college students in Germany are one in 2,600 of the population; in England, one in 5,800. There are many other proofs which he gives. For instance, he notices with wonder that in Germany he saw people of the middle rank reading a translation of Macaulay's History of England, intimating that the same class of people at home would have no such cultivated taste. His impressions of American schools are not complimentary to us. He says, "I may say that competent foreign observers who have studied the American schools, report that, as a general rule, though something is to be learned from them as to providing and maintaining schools, little or nothing is to be learned from any of them as to teaching."

One of the most strongly suggestive points in this valuable report, is in favor of making the secondary schools free to all pupils as a barrier against the aristocratic spirit. I should be glad to quote, but cannot. (p. 625.) But the idea is not without significance for us.

I used to take it for granted, Mr. President, that the American Eagle was the emblem of a good many desirable things. The platitudes of the Fourth of July I accepted as gospel truth. In education, I believed that it was our boast that the poorest might hope to receive the highest culture. But, sir, I have lived to see many things. I have seen well-fed, comfortable, trimly-shaven professional men, nodding to each other like mandarins, as if to say, "Not every one can hope to be as well educated as we. If the senate or the pulpit or the bar can boast such ornaments as we, what matter for the multitude? *All* people cannot be scholars." If I had been told this is my vehement youth, I don't know what furious denial I should have made.

But there is no doubt of the existence of this spirit. I beg leave to say that there is nothing more dangerous to the peace of society and to the permanence of government. Any class of men with superior knowledge and specially fine training inevitably become an aristocracy. When the educated boy returns to his remote and uncultured native village, though his heart warms at familiar scenes and loved faces, he soon finds that between him and his old comrades a great gulf is fixed. He is conscious of no pride. He would resume the old intimacies;

but he cannot. The fact that he knows art and literature and science has cut him off from the equal companionship of the unlearned. The village news being over, and the old spots revisited, the interest flags, and there is nothing to talk of. The villagers resume their labor, their amusements and their gossip. The scholar returns to his books and to his lonely rambles in field and forest.

Let such a state of facts be perpetuated for a few generations and you have one great element of an established caste.

Such gentlemen as have read our former report will remember the additional elements proposed for the course of the English High School. I desire to refer to that document for a fuller statement than I can make to-night.

The teachers of the English High School, aided by several eminent professors, and by the new President of Harvard College, have, at the invitation of our Committee, prepared a sketch of a plan of study which will make a most desirable change for that institution. *It will make its course, and each year of it, for two years certainly, the best possible for any average boy, whatever may be his future destiny.* Latin, of course, is first of the new elements; then physiology; botany, illustrated by living plants and flowers; arithmetic, better suited to the demands of business; a course of English literature, &c.

In due time this will be perfected and laid before this Board; and, as I have said, when speaking of the Latin School, if it is the opinion of members that these two schools can better accomplish the best results for our children apart, instead of complementing each other by uniting, then, by introducing this new programme, and so putting the higher education on a right foundation, and by adding afterwards new practical departments to meet obvious wants, the High School may discharge all its humbler duties with equal faithfulness, while as a centre of intellectual light to a wider circle it will honor the city we all love so well.

I have dwelt with some emphasis upon the very pointed and intelligent observations of the British School Commissioners in the best educated countries of Europe. I wish to say a few words upon the real value of their opinions as a guide in forming our school institutions. As they themselves say, the European systems of education have been formed by each State with

reference to separate wants, and to support the other branches of local government. The Commissioners do not ask England to reform her schools by *imitating* those of the Continent, but by using the best light of continental experience in adapting her schools to meet fully her own wants.

Our institutions have had a development that is unique in history. The best school in Europe would be a failure if transplanted here. And, on the other hand, what would be the astonishment of burgher-dom and beadle-dom at the advent among mediæval ceremonies of a New England town meeting! We must follow the leadings of analogy and make a school system for our needs. But when we consider courses of study, methods of instruction, rationale of discipline and amusement, then as we find human nature the same everywhere, the experience of older and highly cultivated societies is of the greatest value.

I trust, sir, that when England has heeded the earnest warnings of her Matthew Arnold, and has reformed her secondary and superior instruction, that some future Commissioner visiting the United States for professional observation may not find us, like rustics remote from centres of fashion, rejoicing in the styles which a more cultivated taste has discarded.

When, sir, a year ago this matter came up for consideration, I had little idea that we should find any precedent for the proposed institution. I did not know how our desires had been anticipated in brilliant France, and in thoughtful, laborious Germany—that the path was all marked out for us, and that we shared with England the reproach of lagging centuries behind the civilized world in modes of instruction. Nor did I know how general was the conviction among educated men that compelled me to introduce the topic here.

Supposing that I had a private illumination, I go out and find it has been hailing and snowing the same ideas all around me. Inquiry led from point to point. Report and memoir and treatise all contributed their welcome advice, and the vague sense of something wanted has taken a definite shape. It will be for you to examine it. If it is a house of cards, a breath will level it. If it is based on real needs, on wise experience and on the principles of human nature, and especially if it is to lead us to higher things, it will stand the test of scrutiny and become as useful and as lasting as I think it is noble and beautiful.

Gentlemen, it cannot be too often repeated that one of our most urgent, most delicate and honorable duties is in our legislation for the poor. If our schools are defective, the intelligent middle and upper classes will withdraw their children and send them to private schools. The poor have no such choice; their children cannot escape the regimen, good or bad, which is provided. Under the theory of our government, every child is entitled to the best opportunity for culture. While this topic was under discussion at one of our committee meetings, and it was urged that the poor boy should have a chance for a career, a gentleman negligently observed, "If one wants high training he goes to college. There is Cambridge." Much as if he had said to the beggar at his area gate, "You lack food? Why, there is the elevator full of grain near Berkeley Street."

The opportunities for culture and improvement are to be brought to the public; we are not to wait for a public demand. When a need or an abuse in the schools is so apparent that public opinion begins to clamor, then the appointed authorities have been short-sighted or negligent of duty. It was not public opinion, says Carlyle, that drove Columbus across the ocean, or that sustained the soul of Kepler, starving, while he unfolded the planetary system.

That this subject will now receive a thorough discussion, and that good will result in the end, there can be no doubt.

The Board may vote that there shall be no change. This will only postpone the subject, to be renewed another year.

It may establish a third high school, as suggested in the address of Mr. Philbrick.

It may decide to improve the English High School by adopting the new programme, and by adding special instruction in bookkeeping, navigation and other branches. It may make provisions for the easy transfer of pupils at all times from the one high school to the other, without in any way connecting them in studies or discipline. This to be attended to by an educated and disinterested committee.

It may establish a course of study of two years in the English School preparatory to a four years course in the Latin School.

It may establish the minimum age for admission into the full course in the Latin School at twelve years; admission to be determined as now by examination, and not to be limited to

graduates from the grammar schools. And the school may be allowed, as now, to receive pupils of corresponding age, having passed two years in the English High School, or under similar instruction, for a shorter course, say of three or four years.

Any of these changes would be in the right direction. But in view of all the facts, after weighing every scruple of doubt and inconvenience, I cannot find any plan that so nearly satisfies our conditions as the one in the report of our Committee * which looks forward to a consolidation of all high school instruction. It is true, a few slight changes in the plan may be necessary to make it conform to our more mature conclusions; but in its essential character it stands as, in my opinion, it should.

It should not be understood that this outline of a plan is considered complete. I do not believe that the public will long

* *First*, That the City Government be requested to take measures at once to erect a suitable and commodious building for the Latin and English High School, and that, until such building is completed for occupancy, the Government be request to make such alterations in the school-building on Bedford Street as will allow such communication as may be necessary between the portions now separately occupied by the Latin School and by the English High School.

Second, That a programme of study be prepared forthwith by this special committee, aided by the masters of the respective schools, for the first year's discipline of the class to be received at the beginning of the next school year and each year thereafter; the classes to consist of graduates of the grammar schools, and of such other pupils not under twelve years of age as shall be deemed fitted to enter; the prescribed studies to be obligatory upon all, and to comprise what will be of most service to the pupil, whatever course he may afterwards pursue.

Third, That the classes now existing in the two schools continue their respective courses, only allowing instruction in common in the same studies, and interchange of attendance upon lectures when the same can be accomplished; but with the understanding that pupils may be wholly transferred from one course to the other, with the approval of parents and the masters, at the beginning of any term.

Fourth, That this select committee be empowered and directed to report proper systems of study for the second and subsequent years of the new courses;—that pupils be examined at the end of the second year with special reference to their capacities, acquirements and inclinations, and that from that point there be separate courses, of which the pupils, with the advice of parents and masters, may have their choice;—said courses to embrace,

1. A thorough preparation for college.
2. A general course combining English with classical literature and optional branches of science.
3. Special training for various practical pursuits.

Fifth, That, with a view of simplifying and rendering attractive the study of the Latin language, more instruction should be communicated orally, and by the medium of reading-lessons, and less by *memoriter* exercises in grammar, during the first two years of the course.

Sixth, That the institution be called the Latin and High School.

remain satisfied without some provision for still higher education free to all. We should establish our institutions upon the right basis, and we may be sure our children and successors will develop them more fully than we are now able to do. If the plan just mentioned is not to be adopted, I should next consider the suggestion of Mr. Philbrick to establish a third high school. But if this were to be done, I submit, that the present English High School, with its limited course and moderate aims, might do more practical work if it were divided into several coördinate branches, located in different sections of the city. There is no reason why three or four schools of this grade should not be maintained, so that pupils might receive this simple training nearer their own homes. We could then dedicate the new central institution to a higher and more complete work. There will soon be a demand for some instruction above that imparted in the grammar school, and we shall be asked to provide facilities convenient for the various parts of our growing city.

Gentlemen, I have no doubt wearied your patience. I have been obliged to touch upon many statistics, and have no art to make them attractive. You will remember that all reforms move slowly at first; in truth they are seldom successful until unreflecting people are tired to death of them, and shrink from their advocates as bores.

The responsibility is now with you. Let us hope that your decision will be prompted by that love of culture and letters which has so long been the pride of Boston,—that you will not be meanly content with mediocrity,—that you will not shut out the child of the humblest citizen from a share in our common heritage of light and liberty,—that you will so fully restore the old preëminence of the city in education as that future generations will rise up and call you blessed.